THE OLD SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS.

The Society of Painters in Water Colours had its private view on Saturday last, and the exhibition is now open to the public. The collection is a good one, though, perhaps, not above the usual degree of merit. Cattermole and John Lewis do not exhibit, and are missed. The two pictures of largest size and pretensions are 69, "Highland Smugglers leaving the Hills with their Whiskey," by F. W. Topham; and, 129, "Fête Champêtre in the Time of Charles II.", by Fred. Taylor. Mr. Topham's picture is full of fine feeling and expression, but has fewer claims as a composition: the action is disjointed, and the occupation of the principal figure at first sight scarcely discoverable. Notwithstanding this, however, and the fact that the figures are all old friends, there is the "touch of nature" in it which makes "the whole world kin," and forces the admiration of all who look at it.

Mr. Taylor's picture, on the contrary, has some very high qualities, but is wanting in expression. It is a very elaborate work, full of figures, and maintains the artist's position as a colourist.

Mr. Duncan is strong this year: we would especially mention (90) "Boats preparing for the Herring Fishery, off Lowestoft." The same place has furnished him with several other subjects.

Mr. Copley Fielding has, as usual, a large number of charming landscapes. (107) "The Cliffs of Dover," and some from Cumberland, may be especially noted.

Mr. Hunt's drawings of fruit are quite perfect, of their class: (249) "Plums," is better than nature.

Mr. Mackenzie's "Lincoln Minster" (197) is a very fine view of that glorious structure.

We must content ourselves with mentioning a few of the works that pleased us most. (29) "Fishing Boats pushing off," by Bentley; (37) "Tour on the Vrydag's Markt, Ghent," by Callow; all the pictures by Prout; (42) "Old Windmill near Walton," by Branwhite; (44) "A Gossip over the Wedding Dress"—(the face over the chair is worth any thing), by J. J. Jenkins; (111) "Gipsey Encampment," by D. Cox (a singularly fine work); "Como," by T. M. Richardson; and even more especially his 182; (189) Carl Haag's "Schoene Brunnen, at Nuremberg;" and, (185) "Thor's House, Tor," by Geo. Fripp which is singularly fresh and true.

THE NEW SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS.

The two societies opened their rooms together on the same day, and the result was, as it seemed to us, a smaller attendance of visitors at each. The exhibition of the New Society is highly creditable to the members, and may be safely pointed out to foreign visitors for inspection.

Mr. Warren's principal work is a contribution in fresco (233) "The Women at the foot of the Cross:" it has high qualities, but will not be so popular as some of his previous pictures. (122) "The Death of the Firstborn," by the same artist, is a clever example of his style.

Mr. Haghe has but one small picture (49), "The Interior of St. Gomar, Belgium," so beautifully painted as to heighten regret for the circumstance.

Mr. Corbould exhibits his great scene from "Le Prophète," painted by command of Prince Albert for the Queen (84), and "Salome dancing before Herod" (205). Both are remarkable drawings; but we prefer the second.

Mr. Webnert's largest contribution (62), "Sir Thomas Gresham's promise to the City of London" (the last result of which was Mr. Tite's building in Cornhill), is painted with great force. (282) "Columbus at the Convent of La Rabida," is, nevertheless, to our mind, the more beautiful picture.

Mr. Vacher has continued his illustrations of Italy, and contributes several very excellent pictures: (158) "The Piazzetta, Venice," (261) "The Doge going in Procession from the Palace to the Bucentaur," and others.

Mr. Cromek has some clever architectural subjects.

In No. 55, "The Stranger," by Fanny Corbaux, the children are beautiful portrayed.

Mr. Mole's (118) "The Fisherman's Life," is a clever picture.

Mr. Absolon, notwithstanding his dioramic engagements, has contributed several charming bits.

The finest landscape in the room is Mr. Aaron Penley's "Trifaen, North Wales," (242); we have seen nothing better for some time past.

Mr. Bennett's landscapes are exceedingly good, and we must further mention with commendation, the works of Mr. Davidson, Mr. Robins, Mr. Carrick, Mr. Weigall, Mr. W. N. Hardwick, Mr. Howse, Mr. Fahey, Mr. Rowbotham ("A View of Heidelberg"), Mr. Penson, Mr. Lee, and Mr. Kearney, whose (270) "King James decides on commencing Whitehall" has an especial claim on us as introducing Inigo Jones.

METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY.

The Metropolitan Sanitary Association have memorialised the Government on the subject of public agency, or trading companies, in regulating the water supply for the metropolis. They include in their memorial, which has been published by Gadsby, of Fleet-street, a correspondence with Mr. Mill, the political economist, on the subject, in which the latter, in speaking of those who contend that the supply of water is no more a fit subject for Government interference than the supply of food, and should be left, as that is, to the ordinary operations of industry, says that the maxim, "That the supply of the physical wants of the community should be left to private agency is, like other general maxims, liable to mislead, if applied without consideration of the reasons on which it is grounded. The policy of depending on individuals for the supply of the markets assumes the existence of competition. If the supply be in the hands of an individual secured against competition, he will best promote his interest and his ease by making the article dear and bad; and there will be no escape from these influences but by laying on him a legal obligation, that is, by making him a public functionary. Now, in the case of water-supply, there is virtually no competition. Even the possibility of it is limited to a very small number of individuals or companies, whose interest prompts them, except during occasional short periods, not to compete, but to combine. In such a case, the system of private supply loses all that, in other cases, forms its recommendation. The article being one of indispensable necessity, the arrangement between the companies and the consumer is as much compulsory as if the rate were imposed by Government; and the only security for the efficient performance by the companies of what they undertake, is public opinion, a check which would operate much more effectually on a public board.

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The principle, therefore, of Government regulations, I conceive to be indisputable. But it remains to be considered whether the Government may best discharge this function by itself undertaking the operations for the supply of water, or by controlling the operations of others."

Mr. Mill is of opinion that, for the present, "the authority to which the work may most fittingly be entrusted is a commissioner, appointed by the Government, and responsible to Parliament like the Commissioners of Poor Laws. Whether this officer should reform the water system of London by the formation of new arrangements, or by employing, under a rigid system of control, the existing water companies, is a question, not of principle, but of practical expediency."

Samuel Johnson's Pew.—A brass tablet, with suitable inscription, has been erected in pew 18 of the north gallery of St. Clements Danes' Church, ascertained to be the seat occupied for many years by Dr. Samuel Johnson.

NOTES IN THE PROVINCES.

A memorial has been presented to the Norwich council by the young men of that city, praying for the establishment of a free library and museum.——A memorial, it seems, has been numerously signed at Dudley, and presented to Lord Ward, in favour of the lease of Dudley Castle and grounds to the South Staffordshire Railway Company. —— On Wednesday in last week the new grammar school at Wimborne was opened. The new building is erected on the site of the old at the back of the Minster. The style is transitional, and intended to convey the impression of its being built at different periods with an interim of about fifty years. The earliest portion, containing the school-rooms, is in the style which prevailed in the latter part of the reign of Henry VII., and immediately after the foundation of the charity by his mother. The principal front, facing the west, is 135 feet long, and is divided into three portions. The centre consists of a large gable pierced on the ground-floor for the chief entrance to the school, and above it is a four-light traceried window. On each side is a turret 50 feet high, the lower parts of which form entrance vestibule to the masters' houses. The wings on each side of the centre are terminated with projecting gables with large bay windows covered with deep stone weatherings, and the intermediate portions have stone cornices and two tiers of mullioned windows. The north point is 75 feet long, and consists of a receding centre and two projecting gables, one of which has an oriel window. The south and east fronts are comparatively plain, and, owing to the ground, somewhat irregular. The walls are built of bright red bricks, with Caen stone dressings: dark bricks have been worked in to form a variety of patterns, and the roofs are covered with tiles, finished at the top with ornamental ridges. The whole has been carried out from designs and under the superintendence of Messrs. Morris and Elson, of London, architects: Mr. J. G. Smither, clerk of the works. The contractors were Mr. John Score, Mr. James Knott, Mr. John Bugden, and Mr. Henry Hall, all of Wimborne.——Taunton, on the 25th March, was "brilliantly illuminated" with gas *from* peat or turf—a substance abounding in the eastern part of Devon. The *Taunton Courier* states that the jet was of unusual brightness, and left no doubt of its decided claim to preference over the ordinary gaseous supply.—— A model of Plymouth Breakwater, nearly 13 feet in length, has been constructed by Mr. Stuart, the superintendent of the work, and is intended for the International Exhibition. The stones are all on scale, and the shape of each stone is delineated on the superficial structure. To heighten the effect, Mr. Stuart obtained the services of Mr. N. M. Condy, marine painter, in conjunction with Mr. Harris, to form the sea for the model in alto relievo. The effect of storm, according to the *Devonport and Plymouth Telegraph*, is well carried out. At the back of the model is a description in three languages, giving the length, breadth, depth, number of tons of stone used, and also the time, labour, and expense incurred in this great undertaking.——The citizens of Hereford, according to the local *Times*, have been considering the best mode of establishing cheap public baths in that city.——The new baths and washhouses at Birmingham were visited, in three days after their opening for inspection, by no less than 50,000 persons. Besides the architect, Mr. D. R. Hill, the professional men chiefly engaged in the construction of these baths were, Mr. John Cresswell, builder, and Messrs. Haden, of Trowbridge, engineers. The local *Journal* complains of the want of a second swimming bath. The opening for use takes place on 12th inst.——On 21st ult., the first stone of the General Institution for the Blind, at Birmingham, was laid by Mr. T. Goodman, the treasurer, to whose exertions the success that has hitherto attended this valuable charity is mainly ascribed. A description of the building has already appeared in our pages, and we need therefore merely mention that the style selected by the successful competitors, Messrs. Coe and Goodwin, is the Eliza-

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